

JANUARY 27, 2024 SATURDAY- DAY 20

PRAY THAT WE WOULD NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

JAMES 4:11



LOOSE LIPS

During World War II a poster displayed throughout American defense plants cryptically read, "Loose lips sink ships." The point was that idle talk about defense production could give vital information to the enemy. Whether the church realizes it or not, we are in the conflict of the ages.

The foes of darkness have sworn to snuff out the light of life. Sadly, our forces are plagued with loose lips, gossiping tongues, and saints who destroy one another by speaking evil of one another.

James begins this chapter by talking of wars and fights among the brethren, and then goes on to point out the absolute necessity of humility before God. Backbiting and gossip are subtle forms of self exaltation. The premise goes: "If I can put you down, that makes me look better."

But God commands us "not to speak evil of one another." Some people make it their life's calling to be bearer of bad news. The first section they turn to in the newspaper is the legal section.

Who is suing whom? Who is getting divorced? Who is going bankrupt? Who has run afoul of the law today? Then they hurry on down to their favorite coffee shop to

share the gory details with their fellow assassins. In Proverbs 6:16 - 19, God lists seven things that he hates. Among these are "a lying tongue... a false witness... and one who sows discord among brethren." All of these fall under the category of "speaking evil of one another." Why are Christians the only army that tortures its own wounded? When a brother has fallen, we kick the sick; we knock those in shock! God says, "Don't do it! Cut that out!" "But it's true," we object. The truth or falsehood of the matter is not the issue. Someone has well said that you can be sure it is gossip if the one you are talking to is neither the cause nor the solution to the problem. God, in grace, gave us two reasons we should not speak evil of one another. First, we are family. Three times in verse 11, we find the word, "brother."

We may have differences between each other, but we are never to attack one another. That is an act of self mutilation. When one part of the body hurts, we all hurt.

LOOSE HEARTS

The second reason we should not speak evil of one another has to do with presumption. To speak evil of a brother positions us above the law. Which law? The royal law found in James 2:8: "Love your neighbor as yourself." John Wesley and George Whitefield led the Evangelical Awakening in the eighteenth century. Because of theological differences the followers of these two men were often at war with each other in splits and arguments. Once a reporter asked Wesley if he expected to see Whitefield in Heaven. Wesley replied, "No, I do not." Then he explained why.

"George Whitefield is such a godly man. I expect he will be among the inner circle right next to the throne of God. I will be so far back among the throng, I probably won't even be able to see Whitefield."

During the tragedy in Wedgwood Baptist Church, the shooter was heard cursing and denouncing Baptists. In the aftermath, we discovered that his family had been active in another denomination for generations. It would have been easy to make it a holy war, but God gave grace for us to realize that this senseless event had nothing to do with denominational convictions. In fact, a neighboring church of his denomination has become very dear to our congregation and shown love to us in many ways. We have found, indeed that: "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

JANUARY 27, 2024 SATURDAY- DAY 20

PRAY THAT WE WOULD NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

JAMES 4:11



One woman came to her Pastor to beg forgiveness of him. It seems she had been spreading vicious rumors about him throughout the town. Now under conviction from God, She begged his pardon. The Pastor retreated into the back of the house and came back with a pillow. He then took a knife and slashed the pillow open. The wind caught the feathers and soon spread them across the neighborhood. "I will forgive you," he said, "when you return with every feather." "Oh! How could I ever do that?" she cried. "They're spread all over town." The Pastor replied, "So too is the damage done to me by these lies you've repeated." We can be forgiven for speaking evil of one another. But eternity alone can heal the damage. A four year old tried to recite the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who trash basket against us."

Pray that we would not speak evil of one another.

Do not speak evil of one of another, brethren he who speaks evil of a brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

Jas. 4:11

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray for an end to gossip and backbiting within congregations and denominations.
2. Pray that a familial sense of brotherhood will abound across the kingdom.
3. The next time you are called upon to pray in public, ask for God's spiritual blessing to fall on other churches. Name them specifically.
4. Ask God to give you grace to never again publicly disagree with or dispute with another member of the family of God.

Believers are encouraged to show stamina without grumbling.